

## A Pedagogic Holiday.

Some years ago the old man Adam went for a tour on the Continent with his four pupils, Laurence, Willie, George, and Arthur. They were bright, clever young fellows who had been educated at the same public school. They left England in January, and were all four intending to enter the University in the following October. They went with Adam because they loved him. He had some doubts about the expedition. Travel, he knew, would do his young friends good, but it was a serious responsibility to deprive them of their last months at Rugby, so, above all things, it was necessary that they should accomplish at least as much solid work as they would have done under the most favourable circumstances at that famous seminary of sound learning and religious education. It was therefore laid down as a solemn law, never to be broken, that except when they were deliberately taking a holiday, the four pupils should do four hours' solid work in classics every morning. It would be tedious to recite in detail how much they got through; but when the amount was made up at the end of July, and they were able to compare notes with their friends at Rugby, it was found that they were in no way behindhand either in quantity or quality. What a merry time they had! It is a pity that no record exists of it, that no "sacred poet" has written an epic about it, like Clough's "Bothie." Perhaps, however, such a work is even now in manuscript, and may some day see the light.

Their first sojourn was at Lindenstadt, the famous university town of Sorbia, celebrated for Goethe and Dr. Faustus, for its theatre, its concert-hall, its carnival, and its battle-fields. Here, for two months and more, the five friends led an ideal life. They walked through the snow to bathe in the early morning

before breakfast, they worked afterwards in one large room, for Adam was a man of letters and had plenty to do on his own account. Never, I may say, during the six months did a word of harshness or quarrel pass between any of them. After the table d'hôte, where they studied the men and manners of many nations, they skated on the Pleister, or roved over the wide plains of the Folkslaughter, noting all the little stones which showed where each corps was posted, the house or the deep trench in which Napoleon had his headquarters, the eminence on which he slept for an hour during the very middle of the fray, and the cottage before which the allied sovereigns were nearly taken prisoners as they sat on Windsor chairs gazing at what they believed to be their victory. At other times they visited places made memorable by Gustavus Adolphus or Charles XII. and Marlborough, or they took the Pferdebahn (so called because it went "further" than any other Bahn), and visited the cottage where Schiller wrote his "Hymn of Joy," or the humble tenement in which Napoleon first rested his discrowned head.

The afternoon brought the inevitable coffee; then came more work, and then supper. What fun that was! Furnished by Adam with a limited amount of groschens, the pupils went where they pleased, to the Blue Carp, or to Schönpf's, or to one of the many beer-houses of studious Lindenstadt. The delicacies on hand were duly advertised either in the windows or in the *Lindenstadt Day Leaf*. Sometimes a pig standing on its hind-legs with a knife at its throat, with the inscription "This day slaughter-feast," told the readers of the *Day Leaf* that black-puddings were in store for them; or the welcome placard in the window of the Blue Carp announced that liver-nubble soup would be served that evening, a delicacy far superior to *bisque* at the "Trois frères." But their favourite dish was mock-turtle. When that was on nothing else was asked for. So that the party came to be known as the Mock Turtles. When they entered the warm room from the chilly air outside, thick and slab with fumes of pipes and beer, a cry arose from the coloured-capped students, "Here come the Mock Turtles," and before they left Lindenstadt they intended to put an advertisement in the *Day Leaf* with a picture of two mock turtles with knives at their throats, and "This day slaughter-feast" in large letters, thus announcing that the Mock Turtle Union would that evening



hold its last carouse, and inviting friends to come and partake. The idea was a good one, but the inspection of the common purse forbade it. Rainy days were spent in the picture gallery or in the old book shops, a never-ending source of pleasure, for the old book-shops of Lindenstadt are the best in Europe.

Now, it was understood that the languages of each country were to be learnt as the travellers passed through it, and Eve, Adam's sister, who had joined the party, undertook to teach the boys German, for she spoke and wrote that tongue like a native. With three of them she got on very well, but Willie was obdurate. He was a Scotchman, with a very argumentative turn of mind. Tell him his exercise was wrong, he would declare it was right. Tell him it was right and he would do it all different next day. So one day Eve said: "Adam, I can't teach Willie any longer, he won't believe a word I say." So Adam had to fall back upon his pedagogic wiles. He knew that Willie, like most Scotchmen, had a strong turn for philosophy, so he left a small German history of ancient philosophy lying carelessly on the table of the common sitting-room. Day by day he watched Willie cruising round it, looking now at the back, now at the title-page, and afterwards at the leaves where the names of the masters of unknown but attractive lore stood out alluringly in the glory of capitals. "This seems rather an interesting book," said Willie one day. "Oh! do you think so," replied Adam. The attraction of the book became deeper. Adam watched the charm working with his blinking eyes, but treated the whole matter with outward indifference. At last the fish was fairly hooked. Adam knew how to land him. "I should like to read this book," said Willie. "Well, then," said Adam, "I will read it with you." So it was arranged that when the rest went out to supper Willie and Adam should stay at home and read Entepfuhl's "History of Ancient Philosophy," in German, a language which Willie did not understand and which he had positively refused to learn from Eve. So night after night they sat on the sofa together and read the book, Willie's interest in the subject and his insight into what the words must mean leading him into the mysteries of that awful tongue by leaps and bounds. They passed in this way from Thales to Heraclitus, and when they had got as far as Socrates Willie was enthusiastic with excitement. He asked so many questions that Adam could scarcely answer them. Adam then thought

it ripe to remark "You know this is not the best book on the subject." "Oh! isn't it," asked Willie, "what is, then?" "Beller is the standard work. I will give you an order for it, if you like." So the first volume of Beller was purchased, and Willie plunged into it with vigour. The supper hour was not enough for his ardour. He woke early in the spring mornings, and like Horace in the old days, asked for his book and candle before daybreak. He proceeded to write a short translation of Beller into English, and before he returned to England he had completed an abstract of the two first volumes of that author, a good preparation for his Camford schools. He had thus learnt German without knowing that he was learning it, and the master of his College found in his first year that he had a better knowledge of that language than any other undergraduate.

The amusing part of it was that Willie firmly believed that he had preserved his independence intact, that no one had taught him German or induced him to learn it, but that it was all his own idea and his own unassisted effort. Adam chuckled at this as the culmination of his art; but when they were near the end of their time at the close of July, in the Bettenalp Hotel, he could not help congratulating Willie and the others on their knowledge of German, and lifted up the corner of the veil of mystery. "Well, you had nothing to do with my German, at any rate," said Willie, "I taught it all to myself." Adam succumbed. He revealed, in his weakness, the whole plot. Willie stood confused and convicted. All he could reply was, "Well, anyhow, I've learnt it, and you can't unteach me now," a remark more full of temper than logic. I believe that, in revenge, Willie always did admit that Adam had taught him Italian. At Venice and at the Lakes there was plenty of opportunity for that study, and they eventually read the *Comito* of Dante together in the original, which is no light task. Willie, besides being much else, is now one of the best Italian scholars in England, and has a large library of rare Italian works.

Adam was not always equally successful. He knew, for instance, that Laurence was born to be a statesman, that he was the eldest son of Lord Norwich, and that he was destined for quarter sessions, county councils, and eventually for Parliament. Laurence was the mainstay of the party, every inch an eldest son. He told them all what they ought to do, even Adam, and



he was generally right. He worked hard at his classics, and afterwards won a scholarship and a first class, and he is now a county magnate and the father of numerous scions of the noble house of Norwich. He loved music and acting, and was a master of the map of Sorbia; but he would not educate himself to be a statesman. In vain did Adam leave a most seductive edition of Blackstone's Commentaries in his way, and tempt him with a quarto of Adam Smith. The fish would not even nibble at the bait. He diligently studied the instructions of Eve in German, but political science remained unexplored. In April the party was transferred to the Residenz-Stadt of Sorbia, a capital much frequented by English. The Mock Turtles kept up their old habits; but the claims of this famous city, the terrace, the winding river, the unrivalled picture gallery, the Great Garden, and the wildness of the Sorbian Switzerland did not console them for the loss of their beloved Lindenstadt. Easter had come and gone, and the party thought they were entitled to a holiday. This was spent at Vienna and at Venice, three days at one and ten days at the other, Adam and Laurence taking a preliminary run to Erfurt and Weimar. From Venice they passed on to an Italian lake, where they lived till the end of June in a large marble palace with a mediæval garden.

Here the work continued as before, but the amusements were different. It was very hot; an early bathe was necessary for refreshment. The four hours of work in the morning were rigorously exacted, and Italian was studied instead of German. In the afternoon the party climbed the hills, the highest of them Bisbing, with its fields of golden daffodils. The heat of these excursions was bravely encountered, even by the panting Adam. He and Willie were fond of strolling together. As they climbed up the stony paths between the stuccoed walls they would cower in some friendly shade, and then dash across the broad stretch of sunlight, as if they were under fire, until they reached the cover of the next bushes. Grateful to them was the Statiana Villa, with its torrent roaring in the midst of its marble halls, rich with memories of Shelley and Napoleon.

Great was the excitement when their books arrived, which had been sent direct from Sorbia to the lake. The five went to meet them on the frontier, and found two huge packing cases, big with five hundred volumes, the spoils of Rugborough and

Lindenstadt. Life seemed so long in those days that to buy a book was almost to read it. At last the passes were declared to be open, and they made for the refreshing Alps. Of frugal mind, they gave the carriage to their books, and went themselves on foot. Had so many books ever crossed the pass before? The carriage broke down with their weight, and the commanding genius of Laurence was needed to get them out of the difficulty. From the summit of the pass they saw the cottage of their next sojourn on the slope of the opposite hill. The books entered the devout Canton in spite of the censure of the Prince-Bishop. When all the baggage had been loaded at the foot of the mountain, and the tramp upward begun, brawny porters followed with huge hay baskets, full to the brim with books. The devout Canton has hardly survived the shock.

Betten Alp was surrounded with lofty peaks. In front were the alluring forms of the Weisshorn and the Dom; just over the edge was the mighty stream of the Aletsch Glacier, from which sprang the giants of the Bernese Oberland. Adam had provided an experienced guide for the service of the party during their stay, and had issued a peremptory order that no one was ever to go for a walk unattended. Willie, still rebellious, loved metaphysics more than mountains, and, as he had no desire to resist, the others acquiesced. The first necessity was to provide a morning bath. A convenient spot was chosen in a descending stream. The outlet was closed with a carefully constructed dam. Laurence, as became an eldest son, doing nothing himself, sat on an eminence and directed the work like an Egyptian taskmaster. But none of the party were engineers, not even Adam. The dam broke down at the first rains, and renewed more skilfully, broke again. At last the Mock Turtles seized on a large washing-trough, big enough to hold any of them, completely surrounded it with curtains, and bathed boldly in the coldest weather. Sometimes the snow fell around them, but whether the wind roared or the rain poured, at six o'clock in the morning they always bathed.

Thus passed a lovely July of almost unbroken sunshine. The work went merrily on here, with no misgivings as to the competition of Rugborough. They were not without visitors. Once they gave a picnic to the sojourners at the



Beauberg, with hot coffee in the midst of snow and ice. Their chief pleasure was in mountaineering. After the studious morning and the midday meal they scoured the country far and wide, always under the guardianship of their faithful guide. Old Adam felt quite young again; and scaled the mountains without accident, although he was sometimes dragged up like a feather bed and sometimes led down like a cow. In these expeditions George and Arthur were principally to the fore. They were inseparable companions; they always slept in the same room together, and had all things in common. George was the sweetest-tempered of the human race, the most loving, the most unselfish. If a cloud could have come across the harmony of the Mock Turtles the sunshine of George's sympathy would have dispelled it. Once, indeed, his temper was put to the test. High above the Betten Alp towered the Aletsch Horn, the monarch of the group. George and Arthur had set their hearts on scaling this peak before they left, and they had sworn a solemn vow that neither would go without the other. One Sunday Arthur crossed the glacier to the Beauberg; the rest of the party were to follow on the Monday to meet Arthur, and to climb the Sparrenhorn. When they arrived at the Beauberg they found that the Great Professor had organised a party up the Aletsch Horn, and that the weak-minded Arthur, forgetful of his vow, had joined it. George was for an instant in dismay, but the sunshine triumphed. He rejoiced in his friend's exploit as much as though he had been in the expedition himself; he watched him climbing through the telescope, and when the others returned to the Betten Alp he stayed behind to greet him, and to bring him back in triumph. George has had his reward. He has now climbed every mountain in Switzerland, has been Past Master of the Alpine Club, has married the most charming wife in England (so he tells us), and is on the high road to be Lord Chancellor.

At the end of July came the Rugborough holidays, and the merry party broke up. Instead of two terms at Rugborough, one of them probably spent in idleness, the four had seen a good deal of the Continent, had become intimately acquainted with some parts of Germany and Italy. They had learned to converse in either of these languages. They had read more Greek and Latin books than they had ever read in their lives before. They

all did well at the University, and were men of mark in their generation. Three of them are married, and may, perhaps, soon be sending their children to Rugborough, but they would all wish them at the critical age to renew the experience of their own youth, and to have such another pedagogic holiday as they once enjoyed themselves, if they could only find another Adam to accompany them.

OSCAR BROWNING.

